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PAGE 01 BUENOS 06340 051326Z
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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)
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[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 6340

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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PINS, SOPN, AR
SUBJECT: ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT SHUTS DOWN TWO MORE MAGAZINES

REF: BUENOS AIRES 6251

1. SUMMARY: ARGENTINA'S MILITARY GOVERNMENT ON NOVEMBER 2 SHUT DOWN TWO MORE MAGAZINES, BRINGING THE TOTAL TO THREE WITHIN FIVE DAYS. THE REASON GIVEN FOR THE CLOSURES WAS FOR PUBLISHING "DISTORTED INFORMATION AND BIASED COMMENTARIES" AND "FALSE REPORTS MISLEADINGLY PRESENTED THROUGH SENSATIONALIST HEADLINES." THE CLOSURES ARE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTEMPT TO COW THE MEDIA INTO BEING LESS CRITICAL OF THE MILITARY. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) ARGENTINA'S MILITARY GOVERNMENT ON NOVEMBER 2 SHUT DOWN TWO MORE MAGAZINES, "LINEA" AND "QUORUM", AND ISSUED TWO DECREES PROHIBITING THE PUBLICATION, DISTRIBUTION, SALE, AND CIRCULATION OF "LINEA" AND "QUORUM" OR ANY OTHER PUBLICATION THAT MIGHT TRY TO TAKE THEIR PLACE. THE DECREES SAID THAT "THE GOVERNMENT CANNOT ALLOW REPEATED AND SYSTEMATIC ACTIONS DEGRADING TO THE ESSENTIAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE REPUBLIC" AND THAT BOTH PUBLICATIONS HAD

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AGE 02 BUENOS 06340 051326Z

HELPED WORSEN THE CONDITIONS WHICH GAVE RISE TO THE STATE OF SIEGE."

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 1

UNCLASSIFIED

Current Class: [REDACTED]
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1982BUENOS06340

Page: 2

Channel: n/a

3. (U) "LINEA" IS A PERONIST MAGAZINE THAT HAS BEEN VERY CRITICAL OF THE VARIOUS MILITARY REGIMES. THE LATEST ISSUE, EDITED BY PERONIST HISTORIAN JOSE MARIA ROSA, PUBLISHED A COVER PHOTOGRAPH OF THE THREE COMMANDERS OF THE ARMED FORCES OVER A CAPTION READING, "WHO ARE THE SUBVERSIVES AND COOUP?"

4. (U) "QUORUM" PUBLISHED ONLY EIGHT ISSUES BEFORE BEING SHUT DOWN. IT TRIED TO BE AN IN-DEPTH INVESTIGATIVE MAGAZINE, FOCUSING ON SUCH ISSUES AS THE LINKS AND ACTIVITIES OF THE CLANDESTINE P-2 MASONIC LODGE IN ARGENTINA, THE MURDERS OF FORMER ARGENTINE DIPLOMATS HIDALGO-SOLA AND ELENA HOLBERG, AND THE EFFORTS OF REVEREND MOON TO BUY A PUBLICATION HERE. IT WAS EDITED BY ITALIAN-BORN JOURNALIST HOSE PALOZZI.

5. (U) A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN TOLD REPORTERS THAT PRESIDENT BIGNONE ASSURED HIS CABINET MINISTERS THAT THE CLOSURES WERE DESIGNED "TO CLEAR THE ROAD THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO TRAVEL UNTIL IT REACHES ITS AIM OF COMPLETE INSTITUTIONALIZATION" (READ CONSTITUTIONAL RULE), AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS SEEKING TO MAINTAIN A CLIMATE OF "MODERATION AND HARMONY" UNTIL THIS END IS ATTAINED.

6. (U) NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, THESE NEW CLOSURES HAVE ONLY SERVED TO INCREASE CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S HIGH-HANDEDNESS WITH THE PRESS. MANY AGREE WITH THE EDITOR OF "LINEA" WHO SAID AFTER HIS PUBLICATION WAS SHUT DOWN THAT "THERE ARE FORCES WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES WHICH DO NOT WANT ELECTIONS - THE SAME FORCES THAT ACCUSE

PAGE 03 BUENOS 06340 051326Z

IS OF BLOCKING THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY, WHEN THEY ARE THE ONES WHO PRESENT THE OBSTACLE."

7. [REDACTED] COMMENT: IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE CLOSURES WILL HAVE THE DESIRED EFFECT OF COWING THE MEDIA INTO BEING LESS CRITICAL OF THE ARMED FORCES. MEANWHILE, THE INTERNATIONALISTS AMONG OUR ARGENTINE CONTACTS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE DAMAGE TO ARGENTINA'S ALREADY-TARNISHED IMAGE ABROAD CAUSED BY THESE CLOSURES. END COMMENT. BUSHNELL

Current Class: [REDACTED]

Page: 2